



For Immediate Release

Contacts:

Chuck Lombardo (CML)

T: 231.922.6782 M: 231.631.0224

clombardo@cmlmc.com

Dennis Aloia (Grand Traverse County)

231.922.4780

daloia@grandtraverse.org

FREY FOUNDATION AWARDS \$250,000 CHALLENGE GRANT FOR BOARDMAN DAMS PROJECT

Traverse City, Michigan (August 1, 2011) – The Frey Foundation has awarded a \$250,000 challenge grant to Grand Traverse County that will be used to remove Sabin Dam on the Boardman River and restore approximately one mile of cold-water trout stream, 28 acres of wetlands and 7 acres of upland habitat.

The grant is dependent upon project organizers raising \$500,000 in local matching funds from foundations and charitable donations to support dam removal and river restoration. The Oleson Foundation of Traverse City has already stepped up, granting \$25,000 toward meeting that matching requirement.

The removal of Boardman, Brown Bridge and Sabin Dams will restore over 3 miles of cold-water stream, 253 acres of wetlands and 57 acres of upland habitat. It is the most comprehensive dam removal and river restoration in the history of the Great Lakes. The cost estimate for removing Brown Bridge and Sabin Dams is \$5 million. With the Frey Foundation and Oleson Foundation grants, approximately \$3.4 million in new grants have been secured for the removal of those dams, including a grant of \$1 million announced earlier this year from the Great Lakes Fishery Trust.

“The removal of the Boardman River dams will be the largest dam removal and restoration project in Michigan’s history and will set the bar for communities throughout the United States to return aging, obsolete dams into robust waterways that have many environmental and community benefits. Our understanding is there are over 79,000 similar dams in the nation; 2,500 in Michigan alone,” said Milt Rohwer, Staff President of the Frey Foundation. “In making this grant, the Foundation is encouraging other local foundations and individuals who care about the health of the Boardman River and it’s ecologic, recreation and economic impacts to consider supporting this effort to remove the dams, restore the river and join us in making history in the Great Lakes basin.”

Matching funds have already begun to flow to the project, starting with a \$25,000 grant from the Oleson Foundation.

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“The Oleson Foundation is proud to help restore this stretch of the Boardman and create more opportunities for residents and visitors alike to enjoy the many opportunities and benefits that a free flowing cold-water river affords,” said Kathy Huschke, Executive Director of the Oleson Foundation.

Grand Traverse County Administrator Dennis Aloia and Vice-Chairman of the City/County-appointed project Implementation Team, said the timing of the challenge grant and the participation of other funders is crucial to the dam removal and river restoration. “If other foundations and individuals rise to the Frey Foundation’s challenge, we could meet our optimal timeline and coordinate the removal and restoration of both Sabin and Brown Bridge Dams in unison.”

Aloia added that the restoration of the cold-water river and wetland habitat would support economic growth and development by enhancing fishery and wildlife resources and diversity in the watershed that already supports 2 million recreational user days each year.

In addition to natural resource and community benefits, the dam removal and river restoration will support education and efforts to build stewardship. Sabin Dam and its 40-acre impoundment are within the 505-acre Nature Education Reserve that is owned by the County and managed by the Grand Traverse Conservation District (GTCD). The GTCD Nature Center is located adjacent to Sabin Dam. “The removal of the dam and restoration of the river complements the goals of the Nature Education Reserve (NER),” said Lew Coulter, GTCD Executive Director. “The NER was developed to provide nature study, and the removal and restoration of Sabin Dam will create a “living lab” for educators, children, and the community to learn about and participate in a comprehensive watershed restoration project.”

ABOUT THE DAM REMOVAL

The dam removal project will involve: engineering and design, including an analysis of methods to control sediment transport during dam removal; application of all applicable permits; removal of the dam, including demolition of the powerhouse and spillway and breaching the dam; and restoration and monitoring of the project area. Engineering, design, and permitting work began in early 2011. The drawdown of Sabin and Brown Bridge Impoundments ponds is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2011, and deconstruction is scheduled to take place in 2012. The removal and restoration project is expected to take two years to complete.

To learn more about the project and stay updated, visit www.TheBoardman.org.

ABOUT THE FREY FOUNDATION

The Frey Foundation, based in Grand Rapids, is one of Michigan's largest family foundations. Grants are provided primarily to non-profit organizations in western Michigan for projects to enhance children's development, protect natural resources, promote the arts, and expand philanthropic and civic action.

The Frey Foundation was established in 1974 and permanently endowed in 1988 from the estate of the late Edward J. and Frances T. Frey. Mr. Frey was longtime chief executive officer of Union Bank (now Chase) and founded Foremost Insurance Company in Grand Rapids. It was the next generation, David G. Frey, Edward J. Frey, Jr., John M. Frey, and Mary Caroline (Twink) Frey that developed the family foundation that operates today.

ABOUT THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

In 2009, the dam owners (City of Traverse City owns Union Street and Brown Bridge Dams and Grand Traverse County owns Sabin and Boardman Dams) passed resolutions to allow an Implementation Team (IT) to make recommendations and decisions concerning overall planning and direction of the dam removal project. The IT consists of the dam owners and key agency stakeholder representatives.

THE BOARDMAN: A RIVER REBORN - PROJECT HISTORY

Traverse City Light and Power's decision in 2004 to discontinue hydropower generation at Brown Bridge, Boardman and Sabin Dams triggered a process to assess the fate of the dams that were built between 1867 and 1921. The Great Lakes Fishery Trust awarded \$476,000 in 2006 to support the process to determine the fate of dams. That process is considered one of the most comprehensive studies of its type ever undertaken in the United States. It involved over 1,000 people in 180 public meetings and the assessment of 91 options for the future of the dams. In April 2009, the Traverse City Commission and Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners reviewed the scientific data from the study and two recommendations provided by the Boardman River Dams Committee 1) the retention and repair of Brown Bridge, Boardman, Sabin and Union Street dams, and 2) modifications to Union Street Dam and the removal of the Brown Bridge, Boardman, Sabin dams. Traverse City Commission and Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners voted to proceed with the removal of the three dams and modification of Union Street Dam. In September 2010, the development of funding to sustain this project was supported by a joint resolution of the City Commission and County Board to "achieve the shared goals for a coordinated process to pursue the removal of Sabin, Boardman and Brown Bridge dams and modify Union Street Dam."

ABOUT THE BOARDMAN RIVER

The Boardman River includes 179 miles of river and stream tributaries, located in Grand Traverse and Kalkaska counties in Northwest Michigan. There are a total of 287-square miles of land in the watershed that produces 30% of the surface water input for the entire Grand Traverse Bay. The Boardman River plays host to an estimated 2 million recreational user days

annually. The river contains 36 river miles designated as Blue Ribbon trout stream and is considered one of the top ten trout streams in Michigan.

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